

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

26 March 1992

Mrs. Barbara Colby



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Dear Mrs. Colby:

Thank you for your most gracious note of 22 March 1992 regarding the Former Spouse symposium. We too felt that this session was extremely beneficial for all involved. As I stated on Saturday, we particularly appreciated the opportunity to meet our clients in person. These sessions continue to afford us greater insights into the on-going needs of Agency former spouses, both as individuals and as a group.

As you requested, I have enclosed a copy of my text. In your note, you mentioned that the shirt was a "hit" at your Sunday session, and that your children fully appreciated the humor intended. We certainly have come a long way in improving relations between and among the two groups. You have been instrumental in this endeavor, and I hope that your efforts will continue in the years to come.

Regrettably, as Ann alluded to, this was my last session with the former spouses. As I move onto my next assignment, I do so with a great appreciation for the Agency's former spouse community. If I can continue to be of service, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you again for your kind words, and I wish you continued success in obtaining spousal rights.

Sincerely,



Retirement Group

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Enclosure

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March 7, 1991

REF: PL 97-269  
PL 98-615  
PL 99-569  
PL 100-178  
PL 100-453

Attached Summary Brochure

Dear Senator ---

In March 1990, four CIA spouses met with Mr. Charles Battaglia and Mr. Bernard Raimo and members of their staff to discuss our concerns about the requirement that to qualify for certain benefits, a CIA spouse must be married for ten years during the employee's Federal creditable service, of which five years were spent overseas together.

In June we wrote a letter to members of the Senate and the House Select Committees on Intelligence requesting that the requirement be reviewed, with the idea that it be eliminated.

In July we received word that Senator Boren had agreed to Senator Specter's suggestion that a hearing be held on this issue in the coming year. We also heard from Senator Cohen that the Senate's Select Committee had agreed to reevaluate the matter again in the coming year and to hold a hearing on the issue, if necessary.

With the help of the Family Employee Liaison Office (FELO) at the CIA we have identified approximately sixteen former spouses who did not fulfill the five-years-overseas requirement, and therefore cannot qualify for benefits. Since their former spouses are in CIARDS, this leaves them without benefits of any kind.

Our request is that the five-years-overseas requirement be eliminated. If the CIA employee qualifies for CIARDS, with all its attendant benefits, we think the spouse should be qualified for whatever benefits are available should a divorce occur. Our rationale is that family life is disrupted when the family must be separated. An employee can qualify for the five-year requirement by unaccompanied tours, TDYs overseas, and even by unique service performed in the U.S. Even though the spouse shares the stresses this can induce, she/he still must physically reside abroad together with the employee for five years to qualify for benefits. If there is political turmoil or a natural disaster that requires an evacuation of family members,

or an illness requires a departure from the post to seek medical attention, the overseas-time clock stops ticking for the spouse, but not for the employee.

Foreign Service spouses do not have to fulfill a specified time of service overseas to qualify for benefits should a divorce occur. We would like the same consideration to be given to CIA spouses.

The intent of Congress has always been to protect long-time CIA spouses from an impoverished old age. We feel certain that it was not the intent of Congress to create a group of spouses who receive no benefits at all, after a long marriage in which the spouse had little possibility of building a job history or retirement plan. During the marriage, spouses make a unique contribution to the Agency's mission, here and abroad, by their dedicated service of support.

We would welcome an opportunity to meet with your staff and present our views. We would be happy to attend a hearing on the matter. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara Colby



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